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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this writing sampler is to familiarize Delaware teachers and students with the major writing portion of the Delaware Student Testing Program. Included for each grade level (3, 5, 8, and 10) are the original prompt and an example of exemplary student work. Although the intent was to include student work for each of the rubric score points on the Delaware writing rubric, the lack of parent response for permissions limited the amount of student work published. (RS)

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ED 432 766

Spring 1999

DELAWARE

STUDENT TESTING PROGRAM

ITEM SAMPLER

WRITING

Grades 3, 5, 8, and 10

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CS216807

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this writing sampler is to familiarize teachers and students with the major writing portion of the Delaware Student Testing Program. Included for each grade level are the original prompt and an example of exemplary student work.

Although the intent was to include student work for each of the rubric score points on the Delaware writing rubric, the lack of parent response for permissions limited the amount of student work published. Hopefully these exemplars will provide both teachers and students with examples of quality writing at grades 3, 5, 8, and 10.

DIRECTIONS

Read the writing prompt in the box below.

Writing Prompt
Your school is having a writing contest about people who are special. A special person might be a friend, a relative, a teacher, or someone else. Write your paper for the contest telling who this person is and why he/she is special to you.

Thinking about the following will help you focus and plan your writing.

- **Who are some people who are special to you?**
- **Who is the <u>one</u> person you will write about for the contest?**
- **Why did you choose this person?**
- **In what ways is this person special to you?**

My Dad

This is a story about some-one who is special to me. The per-son who I am going to write about is my Dad. One reason that I'm writing about my Dad is because he helps me. He helps me carry things like heavy tables and other heavy objects. My Dad also helps me lite a fire in the fire place. He helps me by lighting a match for me. When were having pasta for dinner he opens the bag for me if I can't get it. Then I pour the noodles into the boiling hot pot. Next my Dad helps me get things that are up high. He helps me get bowls and cecial boxes up in the cabinets.

Another reason that my dad is special is that he teaches me things That I don't know. He taught me how to play sports. My dad was the first one who taught me how to shoot a basket ball. I felt very good when I make my first basket. He also taught me how to hit a base ball. After a while I was one of the best hitters on the block. The next thing my dad taught me was to ice skate. My dad told me to push of with the bake foot and glide. While I was gliding I suddenly fell onto my bot-tom. My Dad thought it was funny but I did-nt. The next thing he taught me was how to ride a two wheeler bike. First he taught me how to keep my balance. The next thing he would do was to push me and then let go. I thought I had it until I fell on my bottom. My father laughed again. He was laughing even hard-er then at the ice rink. Finally I said "lets go in." Once again my Dad laughed. He laughed all the way in. That night I thought I heard my Dad laughing in his sleep.

The third reason why my Dad is special to me is because he spends time with me when I have nothing to do. Usualy I come up and ask if he says "no" Then I say "pleeeeeaaaaase" soon he just can't take it any more and he plays with me. We usualy play hockey and I'm the goalie. Most of the time I make more savers the he makes goals. Sometimes he's in goal. He screams me. Now that I play base ball my father and I have a catch. If it's a nice day we go up to Lancashire and he pitches me some. I laughed at him when I hit it into the out field. Another game me and my dad play is football. I get the ball from the garage and we have a catch. We play for half an hour and then we go inside and get a drink. The last game me and my Dad play is basket ball. Sometimes my Dad and I go one on one. He usualy beats me but sometimes I beat him. Thats why I think my dad is a special person.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- work on strengthening the closing
- work on proofreading skills

Comments:

This well-developed and organized response has a strong introduction, a focused body, and a closing. Smooth, effective transitions help effectively move the piece along. Details are fully elaborated with an attempt at dialogue ("Let's go in." "If he says 'no' then I say 'pleeeeeaaaaase'"). A distinctive style entertains the reader ("That night I thought I heard my Dad laughing in his sleep." "Once again... ").

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DIRECTIONS

Read the writing prompt in the box below.

Writing Prompt
You have received some money as a gift. Your family says you may spend the money after they have approved your idea. Decide how you want to spend the money. Write a letter to your family to persuade them to approve your idea.

Thinking about the following will help you focus and plan your writing.

- **What are some ideas you have for spending the money?**
- **After thinking about these ideas, what *one* idea are you suggesting?**
- **Why is your idea a good one?**
- **Why might your family not like your idea?**
- **How can you convince them to approve your idea?**

Dear Mom,

Now that I'm 16 and it's May 15. (almost my birthday) I was wondering well. Do you remember that money grandma gave me on my thirteenth birthday? Well, I've been thinking and I wanted to know if I could use that money for something I've always wanted to do. You could go with me and so would Danielle but I would pay. Okay, here it goes, could we go on a trip to New York. Remember, I would pay. (With that money grandma gave me.) I know you don't like big trips. But this is my dream this is what I have always wanted to do.

Imagine the first thing we would do would be check into the Grand Central Hotel. The doorman would take our things in the golden carrier, up the elevator and into our room. Our room could have an upstairs with the view of the Statue of Liberty.

Then we would be so exausted from our trip that we catch a ride on a horse and buggie. It takes us to the Central Park, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and then back to the Hotel.

When we are in our room we call a taxi and it takes us to Broadway. There we get three front row tickets to the Sound of Music. The show does'nt start till 7:30 pm so we walk over to the Hard Rock Cafe and eat dinner.

Now mom, that is'nt it so keep reading. (Does'nt it sound like fun so far)

At 7:15 we head back over to the show. Finally the lights dim and it begins. The music is as beautiful as ever and the scenery looks so real. When everyone in the show takes their bow, we head over to Central Park to do some night shopping. You buy a new dress and Danielle and I buye a new outfit.

For a few minutes we watch the ice skaters skate peacefully as they glide like they are flying over the ice.

After we see the skaters we will go over to the scenery on 31st-street then go back to the hotel and sleep peacefully.

I hope you like the trip, mom, and I hope you agree to go because remember it's my dream.

Your Daughter,

P.S.
I already made the reservations

P.S.S.
I will drive

Comments:

This tightly-constructed piece is developed through the use of a unique framework (the dream). The writer's consistent and distinctive style, voice, and tone are attributes of an exemplary paper.

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DIRECTIONS

Read the writing prompt in the box below.

Writing Prompt
Your class has decided to bury a time capsule that teenagers will open in the year 2098. (A time capsule is a container which is placed in the ground and opened sometime in the future.) You plan to contribute one item that represents teenage life in 1998. Write a letter to the teens of 2098 stating what your item is and explaining what this item tells about teenage life in 1998.

Thinking about the following will help you focus and plan your writing.

- **What one item did you choose?**
- **Why did you choose this item?**
- **Why is the item important to teenagers today?**

The item I have chosen to represent the teenagers of 1998 is my school yearbook. I feel that this item shows a broad perspective of our lives. A yearbook can show, and tell the different attitudes and hobbies of the students body. Overall I have chosen this item because of its wide variety and range of subject matter.

Students and teens of 1998 love to have fun. We do this by playing sports, going to dances and hanging out with our friends. Yearbooks cover all of these issues and show what we like to do most. It presents team pictures for all team sports, math league and when we have fun. Teenagers one-hundred year in the future may not realize what we did, how we looked, and how we acted. One-hundred years is more than a lifetime for us, but yearbooks last forever. My ideas on this matter also predict that the students one-hundred years ahead of us will like to see how we dress and fashion our hair. Styles have changed over the centuries from frontiersmen to cowboys, to hillbillies, to bimbos, to the present day. I don't know what they would come up with for us.

A yearbook shows many styles and fashions because it has individual pictures for everyone in the school. I remember how funny it was looking back at my parents' yearbooks and seeing all the wacky hair styles and odd clothes. I'm sure that the teens of tomorrow will laugh at our pictures as we once did at our forefathers. Yearbooks provide many memories of good and bad, happy and sorrow, and I'm sure you kids of 2098 will feel the emotions too.

This item also shows you how much fun we had as teenagers. I don't know how you may be living now, but don't waste these happy days. Your life will just get harder and harder as you grow older. This item shows teenage life by presenting numerous pictures of how we lived our life and all of the fun that we had.

Yearbooks are the best way for me to represent all of the fashions, hobbies, and enjoyment we experienced. This item is the mirror of our lives. It shows us in our ups and downs. Overall in my perspective I feel that a yearbook alone can best represent myself and the entire era of 1998 teenagers. Remember kids in the future will look back at you too. Have fun, and don't waste the glory days.

Suggestion that might improve student writing:

- explore various strategies thus promoting a more distinctive style and voice

Comments:

This writing demonstrates strong overall coherence and unity with smooth transitions and an effective introduction and closing. The writing is tightly constructed with little extraneous material. The writer carefully names and describes details relevant to the topic. The use of precise language clearly conveys the writer's intent ("glory days" and "one hundred years is more than a lifetime for us").

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DIRECTIONS

Read the writing prompt in the box below.

Writing Prompt
The county owns some land that it wants to use to benefit the community. What would you advise the county to do with this land? Write a letter to county officials suggesting how the land might be used.

Thinking about the following will help you focus and plan your writing.

- **What are some possible uses for the land?**
- **After thinking about these uses, what *one* use of the land are you suggesting?**
- **What might be some advantages associated with this use?**
- **What might be some disadvantages?**
- **Why is your suggestion a good use of the land?**
- **Why would your proposal be beneficial for the entire community?**

To whom it may concern,

Recently, I was made aware that the county is ready to develop the land located in the middle of Smalltown. The town is very excited, and is ready to submit its plans to construct a new Community Center. This proposed center plans to house an open floor for community events, a new playground, and an olympic sized pool. There is no center like this within the county, and we would be happy to have it here in Smalltown. We see four major benefits which the center would bring to the community. Recent accidents involving children in the roads will decrease. The closure of the Metalworks plant put many out of work, and this will create new jobs. The pool will give those less fortunate a chance to cool off in the hot summer months. Finally, the center will help to open new lines of communication through the town. These all make our town better.

As you know, Smalltown has had numerous problems with the commuters who travel through our town to get to Miami. These drivers speed through our town, and cause many accidents. This year alone, we have already had seven children killed by hit and run drivers. This number is unprecidented, and is a blemish to our town. The proposed playground gives our children a safe place to play without the hazards of wreckless drivers.

The closure of the MetalWorks outputing plant hurt our town tremendously. Seventy two citizens were put out of work. Our proposed center adds an additional twenty four full time jobs, and thirty two part-time jobs. Our town is not the wealthiest of towns, but we know that we need these jobs.

Many people in the town are in a low to middle income bracket. Not all of these people have the money to pay for a membership to a pool. Here in the south, when it gets hot, many fathers get together and open a fire hydrant for the children to play in. This is unsafe for our families. The proposed olympic sized pool will accomadate many of these families looking for a fun and safe way to "beat the heat."

Finally, we feel that this center will improve this community tremendously. At one time, this was a very close knit community. Everyone knew each other and the town prospered. This is what we are striving to bring back. We want to open new lines of communication, and make this community the best it can be. If this center is built, it will be directly in the middle of town and could serve as a magnet to draw people together. Please review this plan, and we hope you see that this center will return to you what you have given it: A chance to succeed.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- work on proofreading skills
- explore various strategies that promote a more distinctive style and voice

Comments:

This response is unified with smooth transitions and fully elaborated specific details. The vivid and precise word choice promotes the effectiveness of the piece. There are minor errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling but not enough to adversely affect the score.

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